



# TOWN OF ST. JOHNSBURY

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## Meeting of the St. Johnsbury Select Board June 23<sup>th</sup>, 2025 @ 6:00 pm

Present-

Select Board: Frank Empsall, Dennis Smith, Tracy Zschau

Staff: Chad Whitehead, Rachel Waterhouse, Joe Kasprzak, Matt Krajeski (via Zoom), Brad Reed, Matthew Walsh, Kresten Sterling

Public: KATV, Elizabeth Emmons, Issiah Willson, Jim Brown, Dana Gray, Bobbie Sterling, Don Smith, Cari Carlet, Ian Carlet, Jim Brown, Sarah Marks, Jason Marks, Molly Marks, Kim Fontaine, Willie Nickerson, Jane Gonyeau, Rich Lyon, Maurice Chaloux, Alec Morris

### Agenda Amendments:

- None

### Public Comment:

- None

### Minutes:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Frank to approve the June 9<sup>th</sup> Select Board minutes with the noted corrections. All in favor.

### Warrants:

- On a motion by Frank and second by Dennis to approve the warrants as presented. All in favor.

### Liquor Licenses/ Tobacco Licenses:

- None

Bylaw Modernization Hearing: On a motion by Dennis and second from Tracy, the board opened the hearing for the Bylaw Modernization.

- Elizabeth Emmons expressed concerns with Agriculture being permitted use in all zoning districts.
- Rich Lyon expressed concerns with Agriculture use, but also some additional definitions that he felt could use some work and suggested that representatives from the Development Review Board work with the Planning Commission to address those concerns.

- Jim Brown indicated that the Planning Commission can reopen the Agricultural concerns.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Frank the board closed the hearing.

#### Planning Commission Appointment:

- On a motion by Frank and second by Dennis Issiah Willson was appointed to the Planning Commission.

#### Hillside Avenue Property Transfer

- On a motion by Frank and second by Dennis, the Hillside Avenue Property Transfer Agenda item was tabled.

#### Fire Department Ballistics Equipment Request

- Chief Reed addressed the board with a request to use Fire Department Equipment Reserves to purchase ballistic personal protective equipment.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Frank the board approved the use of \$6,823 to be transferred to the General Fund for the purpose of purchasing the ballistic personal protective equipment as requested by Chief Reed.

#### Police Department Action Plan Update

- Chief Pierce addressed the board and reviewed his internal plan to address items included in the JW Leadership Consulting report completed by Col. James Baker.

Hillside Avenue Property Transfer- on a motion by Frank and second by Dennis the board reopened the Hillside Avenue Property Transfer agenda item.

- Maruice Chaloux and Alex Morris approached the board to request a property transfer for a 50' wide 0.41 acre parcel owned by the Town of St Johnsbury which dissects Mr. Morris's property. The parcel owned by the Town appears to have been intended to use for the creation of a public road which was not constructed. Mr. Morris would like sell the property and joining the 50' parcel would make the property more developable.
- On a motion by Frank and second by Dennis the board approved the transfer of a parcel of land with no improvements thereon, located on Hillside Avenue, Parcel ID 291049.003, and being a portion the same lands and premises conveyed to the Town of St. Johnsbury recorded in book 120 page 244 which is identified on Land Survey Platt Titled "Land of Town of St Johnsbury, VT" recorded on Slide 230 in the St Johnsbury Land Records, being 0.42 acres to Alex Morris and authorized the Town Manager to coordinate with Mr. Morris, for Mr. Morris to cover all legal fees for both himself and the Town of St. Johnsbury for the transfer.

#### Bylaw Modernization-

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Frank the board tabled the Bylaw Modernization amendments.

## Town Manager's Report:

- Informational meetings following the Statistical Reappraisal have been completed and final reappraisal notices are being mailed tomorrow.
- Tax sale is scheduled for August 21, 2025. Certified mailings will be going out June 2, 2025 to property owners that are in the tax sale proceedings and lists will begin to appear in the paper in late July. People that have found themselves delinquent should reach out to me as the Delinquent Tax Collector to discuss payment arrangements if eligible.
- Sarah Gagne starts as the Recreation Director with the start of the fiscal year. She will be onboarded this week as a Town employee.
- The Situation Table training is at Vermont State University in Lyndon this Thursday and Friday. As mentioned previously is a unique, risk-based, rapid triage model that brings together multiple human service providers to address situations where individuals and/or families face a specific threshold of Acutely Elevated Risk (AER).
- All of this last year's Rental Housing Improvement Grant program awards have been closed out. The next round of grants will be open soon and rental owners should receive grant information in the mail soon.
- Department of Public Works:
  - Guard rails are up on Farmer Drive, Mt Vernon Street, Mt Pisgah and East Village Road.
  - Maintenance crews have been patching potholes, ditching and changing failed culverts, adding gravel to back roads affected by last year's flooding, mowing cemeteries and parks, repairing hydrants, cleaning out catch basins and sewer mains, street sweeping and beginning sidewalk and stop bar painting (weather permitting).
  - The Mt Pisgah road collapse and the Public Works riverbank slide have both been repaired.
  - The Goss Hollow Road slides have been bid out and was awarded to Alliance Construction with an anticipated start date in August of this summer.
  - Anticipate about 3 more weeks of work to do on flooding repairs. Cathy Hanks is working with FEMA officials to get projects submitted for reimbursement.
  - Grader is working around Libby Road, Crepault Hill, Rabbit Plains, Goss Hollow area this week. Next week the grader will be in the area of New Boston, Spaulding Hill, Mt Pisgah area in the next two weeks.
- Fire Department:
  - Finalizing Preservation Trust Grant for the restoration of windows- the window work is in construction and the Chief continues to explore if the funds can include restoration of the front overhead doors.
  - Starting a new firefighter at beginning of fiscal year
  - Arrival of new apparatus is anticipated late summer
  - Initiating a new dorm safety fire prevention program for SJA
  - Working with the Town School at beginning of next school year to produce our own fire prevention video for elementary schools

- The ballistic equipment request was on tonight's agenda and the Chief will be ordering those if funds were approved.
- Initiated a new officer development program in partnership with Littleton Fire
- ISO evaluation is anticipated to be this fall.
- SAFER grant application is currently open and we will be submitting to fund additional fire fighters.
- Police Department:
  - Shawn Pereira has graduated from the Vermont Police Academy and is working on our internal training requirements.
  - The Town received a grant from the Vermont Department of Public Service to replace the 2015 unmarked Explorer with a new EV.
  - PD computer installation is complete.
  - As reported earlier by the Chief, the items discussed in the leadership report have been developed into an action plan for the PD.
- Dispatch:
  - The Town has signed up for a Department VT Alerts account and Dispatchers are completing the training. We have been using VT Alerts since the flooding last year through the State's platform. The changeover will allow us to send out alerts directly without contacting the State.
  - New computers have been installed.
  - Cameras and switch have been installed and are operational.
  - 2025 Audit with the State of Vermont for Criminal Justice Informational Services (FBI) compliance is underway
  - Identifying recent radio issues and replacing all outdated equipment on both Dispatch work stations
  - Simulcast radio project is in construction phase and will result in broader capabilities for Radio coverage and service area. Anticipation of completion by August.
- Wastewater Treatment Facility:
  - There are new pumps and mixers arriving that will be included in the upcoming Solids Handling project. The 90% designs for the solids handling project were submitted to the State of Vermont for review. We anticipate that this project will be bid this fall.
- Water Treatment Facility:
  - Continue start up testing and we anticipate the new plant will be online in July with final work wrapping up late summer.

#### Other Business:

- Steve provided an update on the process and timeline for the Evaluation of the Town Manager

#### Executive Session:

- On a motion by Dennis and second by Frank that there is a need for an executive session to discuss a contractual matter where pre-disclosure could place the Town at substantial risk. All in favor.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Frank to enter executive session and invite the Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager. All in favor.
- On a motion by Dennis and second by Frank to exit executive session. All in favor.
- The Chair had nothing to report.

On a motion by Dennis and second by Tracy the board adjourned by unanimous decision.

June 23<sup>th</sup> Select Board Meeting Video:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/FXLNMPA78K1N86puZfczsCmQqWxCAs9thXMBIAN2i91zlrCYmptkgfik7y4JPufB.HCUVKR9Qm0H2v0iE>

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